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ABSTRACT

These two reports examine the passing rates of St. Petersburg Junior College (SPJC) students on the College Level Academic Skills Test (CLAST). The first report focuses on the 549 SPJC students who took the CLAST for the first time in June 1989, while the second report offers information on the 756 SPJC students who took the CLAST in October 1989. Both reports provide information on the CLAST passing rates of SPJC students in comparison with other Florida students; means scores for CLAST subtests; student characteristics; and passing rates correlated with number of semester hours taken, type of degree, and grade point average (GPA). In addition, the first report compares passing rates based on 1986 standards and the higher standards imposed in fall 1989, and both reports look at patterns of success among CLAST retakers. Highlighted findings include the following: (1) 89% of the SPJC students who took the CLAST for the first time in June 1989 passed all four subtests, while only 66% of those who took the CLAST in October did so; (2) in June 1989, SPJC students had a higher average passing rate than the average for all Florida community colleges (80%), or for all state universities (88%); (3) students studying for an associate in arts degree did better on the essay and mathematics subtests than students studying for the associate in science degree; (4) only 43% of the students who took the CLAST in June 1989 would have passed the examination under the October 1989 standards; and (5) passing rates were higher when only one or two subtests had to be retaken.

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St. Petersburg Junior College

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM ABSTRACTS

PERFORMANCE OF ST. PETERSBURG JUNIOR COLLEGE STUDENTS ON THE JUNE 1989 CLAST

PERFORMANCE OF ST. PETERSBURG JUNIOR COLLEGE STUDENTS ON THE OCTOBER 1989 CLAST

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Volume 4 Number 1 — *Fall 1989*

Volume 4, Number 3 — *March, 1990*

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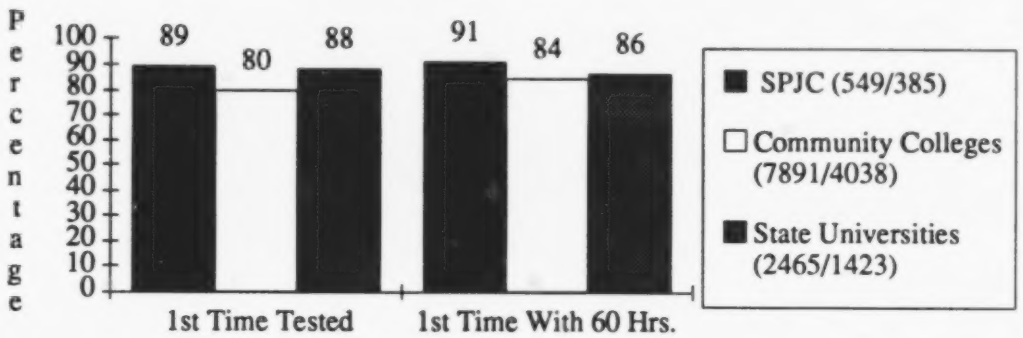
PERFORMANCE OF ST. PETERSBURG JUNIOR COLLEGE STUDENTS ON THE JUNE 1989 CLAST

Five hundred forty-nine (549) SPJC students took the CLAST examination for the first time in June 1989 with a passing rate on all subtests of 89%. Of this group 385 students had completed over 60 semester hours. The passing rate on all four subtests for that sub-group was 91%. Graph 1 compares the passing rate of the SPJC students in each group with like groups in the 28 community colleges and the nine state universities. The percent of first time tested SPJC students who passed the four CLAST subtests exceeded the comparison groups whether or not they had completed 60 semester hours.

GRAPH 1
COMPARISON OF CLAST PASSING RATES
June 1989



COMPARISON OF MEAN SCALED SCORES FOR JUNE 1989 SUBTESTS

When the SPJC total group of first time tested students is compared to five identified groups of first time tested students, the SPJC student subtest scores exceeded all subtest means for the All Students group, Community College A.A. and Community College A.S. students. The University Native group means on all subtests exceeded SPJC student scores. The University Transfer group mean exceeded SPJC student scores in writing.

TABLE 1
SPJC MEAN SCALED SCORES ON CLAST
SUBTESTS COMPARED TO STATE SCORES

	Essay	Writing	Reading	Math
SPJC	5.20	317	321	309
All Students	5.01	316	315	307
Univ. Native	5.34	325	324	314
Univ. Transfer	5.03	318	321	305
Com. Coll. AA	4.93	314	313	306
Com. Coll. AS	4.64	304	305	293

DESCRIPTION OF SPJC FIRST TIME TESTED STUDENTS

Table 2 describes the group of first time tested SPJC students. The majority were white females who were working towards an A.A. degree and who had taken 60 or more semester hours at the time

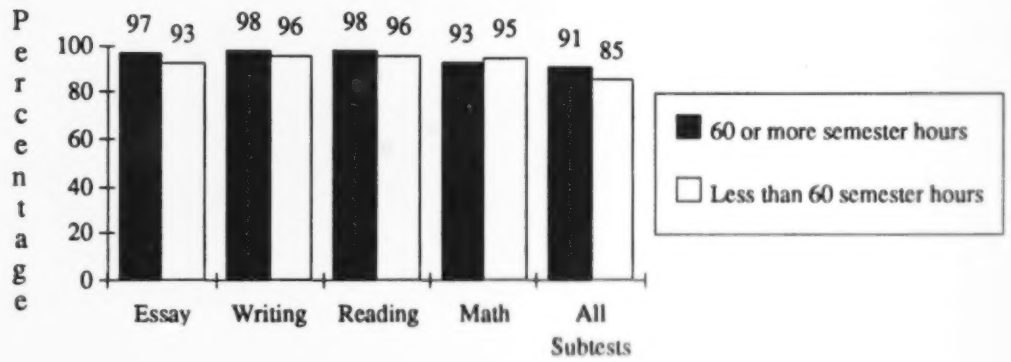
TABLE 2
DESCRIPTION OF SPJC FIRST
TIME TESTED STUDENTS

	Number	**Percent**
Sex		
Male	203	37.0
Female	346	63.0
Race		
White	496	90.3
Black	19	3.5
Hispanic	15	2.7
Asian	11	2.0
All Others	8	1.5
Degree		
A.A.	340	61.9
A.S.	206	37.5
Other	3	0.6
Sem. Hrs. Earned		
60 and over	385	70.1
Under 60	164	29.9

FIRST TIME TESTED WITH 60 OR MORE SEMESTER HOURS COMPARED TO THOSE WITH FEWER THAN 60 SEMESTER HOURS

More students with 60 or more semester hours passed the communications subtests--reading, writing, and essay--but more students with fewer than 60 semester hours passed the computation subtest.

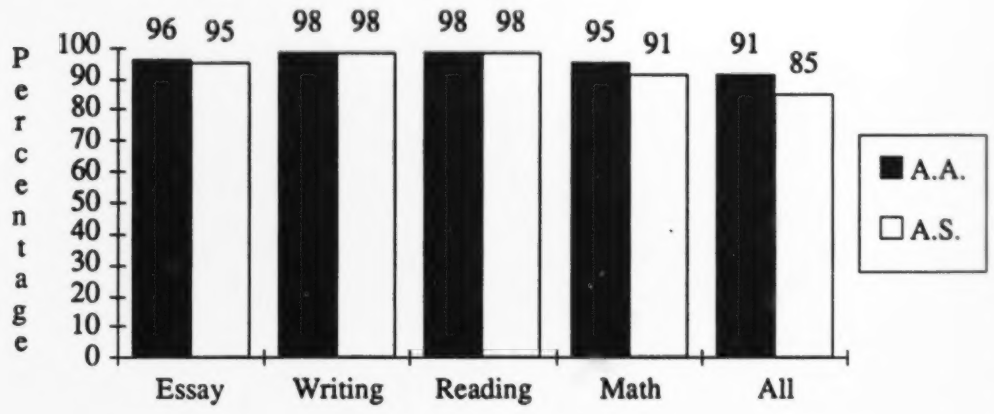
GRAPH 2
PERCENT PASSING CLAST SUBTESTS BASED ON NUMBER OF SEMESTER HOURS TAKEN
June 1989



FIRST TIME TESTED A.A. STUDENTS COMPARED TO A.S. STUDENTS

Graph 3 compares the percentage of students passing each subtest based on the degree sought. More students failed the mathematics subtest than any other. The essay subtest had the next highest failure rate. Students studying for the A.A. degree, however, did better on the essay and mathematics subtests than those studying for the A.S. degree. Both groups did equally well on the writing and reading subtests.

GRAPH 3
PERCENT PASSING CLAST SUBTESTS BASED ON DEGREE
June 1989



In order to examine the relationship between passing CLAST subtests and G.P.A., the number of A.A. and A.S. students passing one, two, three or all subtests was examined. Table 3 shows that 546 of the 549 students tested were degree seeking andthat all passed at least one subtest. According to the data, having a high G.P.A. does not guarantee that a student will pass all four subtests. Conversely, having a low G.P.A. does not mean that the student will not pass all four subtests.

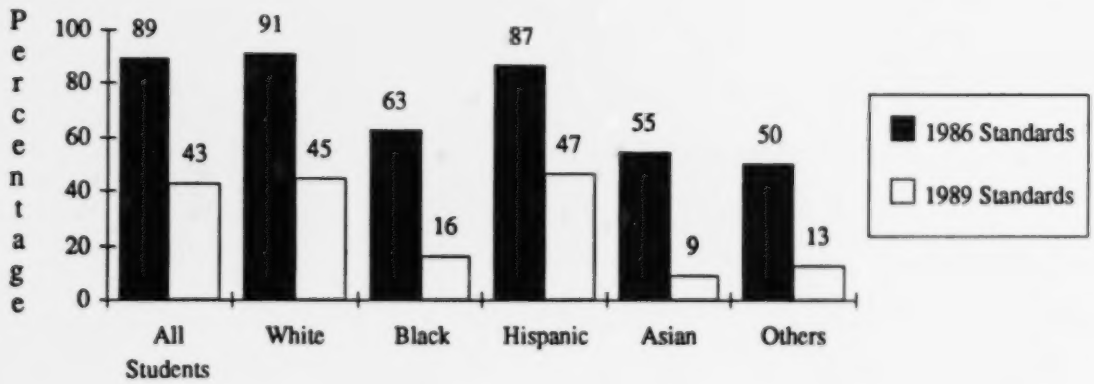
TABLE 3
GPA OF FIRST TIME TESTED A.A. & A.S. DEGREE SPJC STUDENTS

	Number Tested		Passed One Subtest		Passed Two Subtests		Passed Three Subtests		Passed Four Subtests	
G. P. A.	A.A.	A.S.	A.A.	A.S	A.A.	A.S	A.A.	A.S.	A.A.	A.S.
3.50-4.00	59	30	0	0	0	0	2	0	57	30
3.00-3.49	93	37	0	0	2	1	7	1	84	35
2.50-2.99	92	68	1	0	0	1	1	7	90	60
2.00-2.49	85	61	2	2	5	2	10	14	68	43
Below 2.00	11	10	0	0	0	0	1	2	10	8
Total	340	206	3	2	7	4	21	24	309	176

1986 STANDARDS VS. 1989 STANDARDS

Eighty-nine percent (89%) of the first time tested SPJC students passed all four subtests based on the 1986 standards. These standards were: essay, 4; writing and reading, 270; and mathematics, 275. For the October 1989 test, the standards were raised as follows: writing and reading, 295; and mathematics, 285. The essay remained at 4. Graph 4 compares the percentage of June 1989 students who passed based on the 1986 standards with the percentage who would have passed based on the 1989 standards. Only 43% of the students would have passed all four subtests based on the increased standards.

GRAPH 4
PERCENTAGE OF SPJC FIRST TIME TESTED STUDENTS PASSING
ALL SUBTESTS BASED ON THE 1986 & 1989 STANDARDS
June 1989

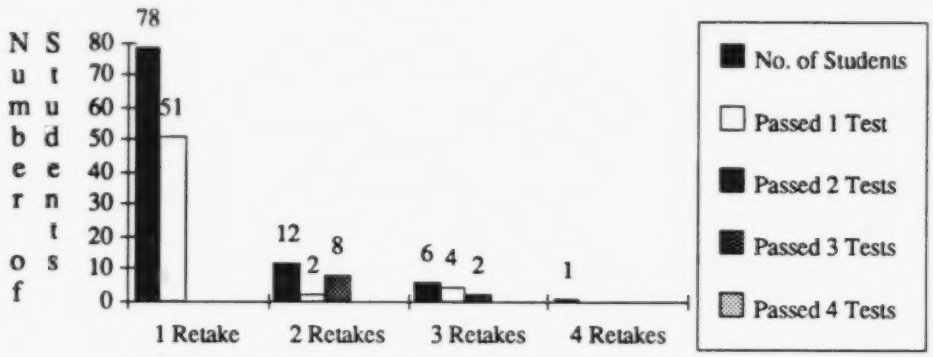


Historically, based on the number of items in the subtests, we know that the approximate number of additional items students must answer correctly to pass on the1989 standards is 5 out of 35 items in writing, 6 out of 36 items in reading, and 7 out of 56 items in mathematics. This means students must increase their proficiency by no more than 14 percent in writing, 17 percent in reading, and 12 percent in mathematics. Accordingly, attainment of the 1989 standards appears reasonable.

CLAST RETAKES

Ninety-seven SPJC students were classified as retakes. Graph 5 describes the number of students who registered for one to four subtests and the number in each group who successfully passed subtests. The passing rate on all subtests taken was higher when a student had only one or two areas to be retaken. Thirty-eight students failed to pass one or more of the scheduled retakes. No student who had three or four areas of retake passed all areas successfully.

GRAPH 5
NUMBER OF STUDENTS RETAKING AND PASSING
CLAST SUBTESTS
June 1989



QUESTIONS

1. Given the seeming anomaly in mathematics that students with fewer than 60 semester hours seem to do better than students with more than 60 semester hours, should students be encouraged to take the CLAST subtest directly after completing their mathematics requirements?
2. What needs to be done to increase the passing rate for students at the 1989 standards?
3. What assistance should be provided to students who must retake subtests to help them pass?
4. How many students eventually pass all subtests after successive retakes?

Please direct questions or comments about this Eductional Abstract or suggestions for future issues to Dr. Susanne Fischer, Director of Institutional Research, Institutional and Program Planning.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM ABSTRACTS

St. Petersburg Junior College

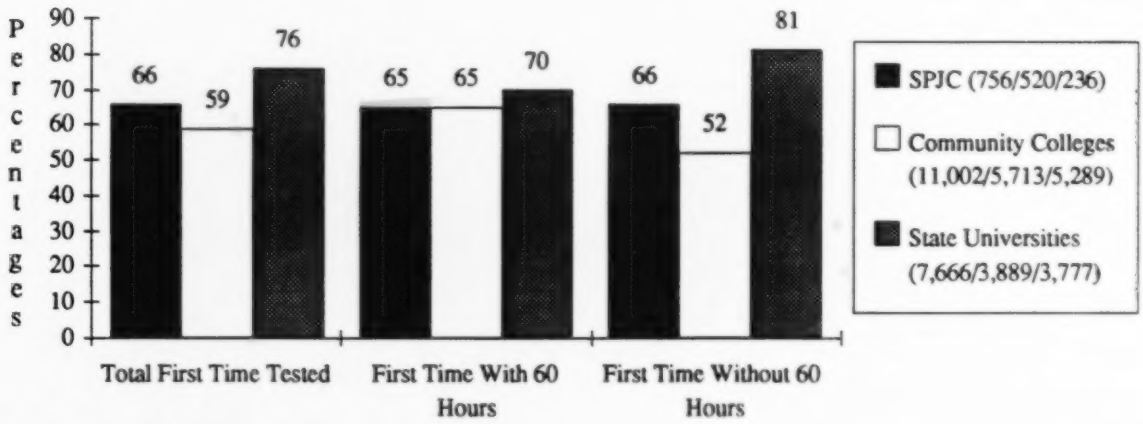
PERFORMANCE OF ST. PETERSBURG JUNIOR COLLEGE STUDENTS ON THE OCTOBER 1989 CLAST

Volume 4, Number 3 *March, 1990*

PERFORMANCE OF ST. PETERSBURG JUNIOR COLLEGE STUDENTS ON THE OCTOBER 1989 CLAST

In October 1989, 756 SPJC students took the CLAST examination for the first time in October 1989 with a passing rate on all subtests of 66%. Of this group, 520 students had completed 60 semester hours or more and 236 had completed fewer than 60 semester hours. The passing rate on all four subtests for these sub-groups was 65% and 66%, respectively. Graph 1 compares the passing rate of the SPJC students in each group with like groups in the 28 community colleges and the nine state universities. The percent of first time tested SPJC students who passed the four CLAST subtests equalled or exceeded the comparison groups of community college students.

GRAPH 1
COMPARISON OF CLAST PASSING RATES ON ALL SUBTESTS
OCTOBER 1989



COMPARISON OF MEAN SCALED SCORES FOR OCTOBER 1989 SUBTESTS

When the SPJC total group of first time tested students is compared to five identified groups of first time tested students, the SPJC student subtest scores exceeded all subtest means for the Community College A.A. and Community College A.S. students. The SPJC student subtest scores also exceeded reading and mathematics means for the All Student group and mathematics means for the University Transfer group. The University Native group means on all subtests exceeded SPJC student scores.

TABLE 1
SPJC MEAN SCALED SCORES ON CLAST
SUBTESTS COMPARED TO STATE SCORES

	Essay	Writing	Reading	Math
SPJC	4.90	316	322	309
All Students	4.91	318	320	308
Univ. Native	5.27	327	328	319
Univ. Transfer	4.93	319	322	306
Com. Coll. AA	4.74	313	316	303
Com. Coll. AS	4.35	304	309	292

DESCRIPTION OF SPJC FIRST TIME TESTED STUDENTS

Table 2 describes the group of first time tested SPJC students. The majority were white females who were working towards an A.A. degree and who had taken 60 or more semester hours at the time of testing.

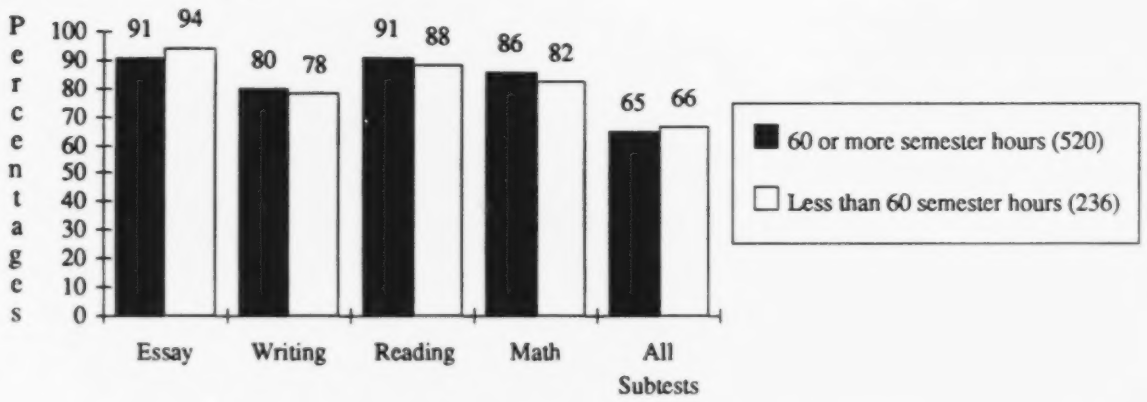
TABLE 2
DESCRIPTION OF SPJC FIRST
TIME TESTED STUDENTS

	Number	Percent
Sex		
Male	322	42.6
Female	434	57.4
Race		
White	680	89.9
Black	33	4.4
Hispanic	16	2.1
Asian	18	2.4
All Others	9	1.2
Degree		
A.A.	535	70.8
A.S.	214	28.3
Other	7	0.9
Semester Hours Earned		
60 and over	520	68.8
Under 60	236	31.2

FIRST TIME TESTED WITH 60 OR MORE SEMESTER HOURS COMPARED TO THOSE WITH FEWER THAN 60 SEMESTER HOURS

Graph 2 compares subtest scores of SPJC students with sixty or more semester hours to those with fewer than sixty semester hours. More students with 60 or more semester hours passed the reading, writing, and mathematics subtests--but more students with fewer than 60 semester hours passed the essay subtest.

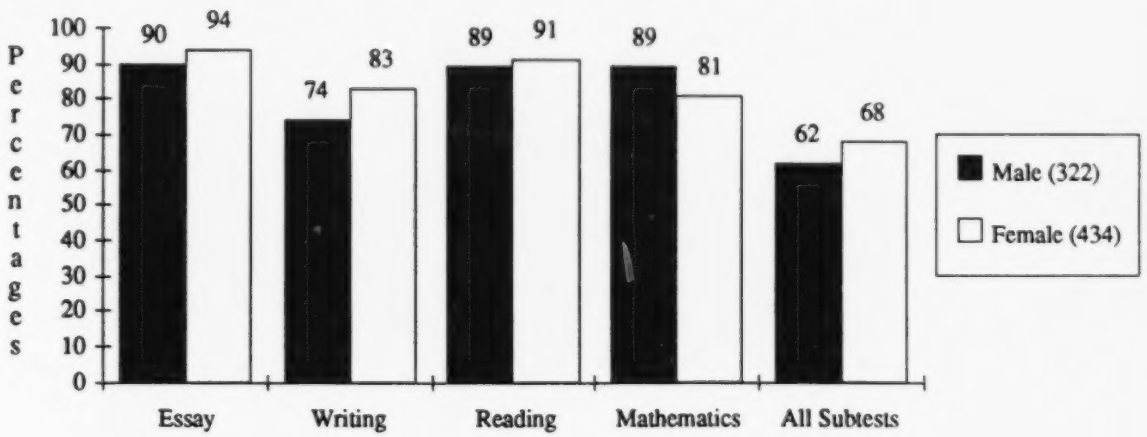
GRAPH 2
PERCENT PASSING CLAST SUBTESTS BASED ON
NUMBER OF SEMESTER HOURS TAKEN
OCTOBER, 1989



FIRST TIME TESTED STUDENTS COMPARED BY GENDER

SPJC subtest student scores are compared by gender in Graph 3. More female students passed the communications subtests - reading, writing and essay - but more male students passed the computation subtest.

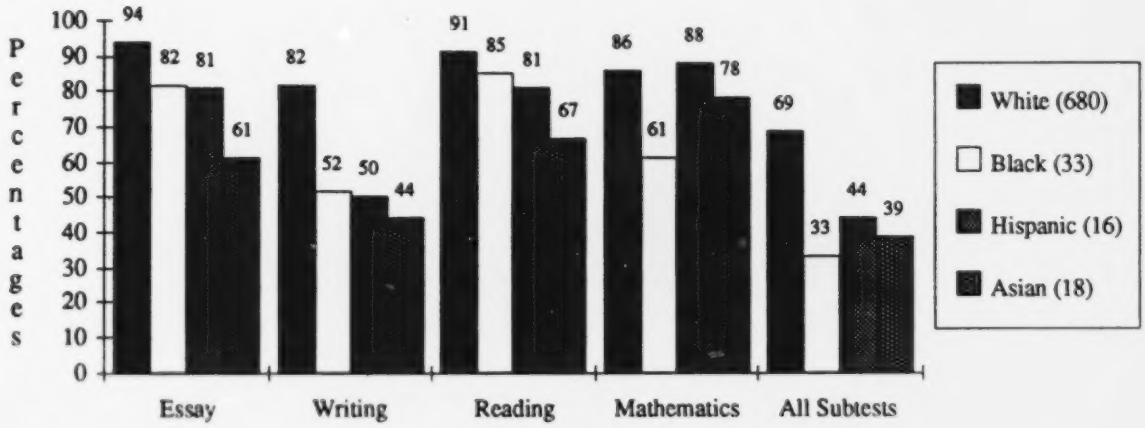
GRAPH 3
PERCENT PASSING CLAST SUBTESTS BASED ON GENDER
OCTOBER, 1989



FIRST TIME TESTED STUDENTS COMPARED BY ETHNICITY

Selected ethnic groups are compared in Graph 4. The percentage of white students who passed the communications subtests was higher than for students in any other subgroup. The percentage of Hispanic students who passed the computation subtest was highest of all of the groups; the percentage of blacks was lowest. More white students than any other group passed all four subtests.

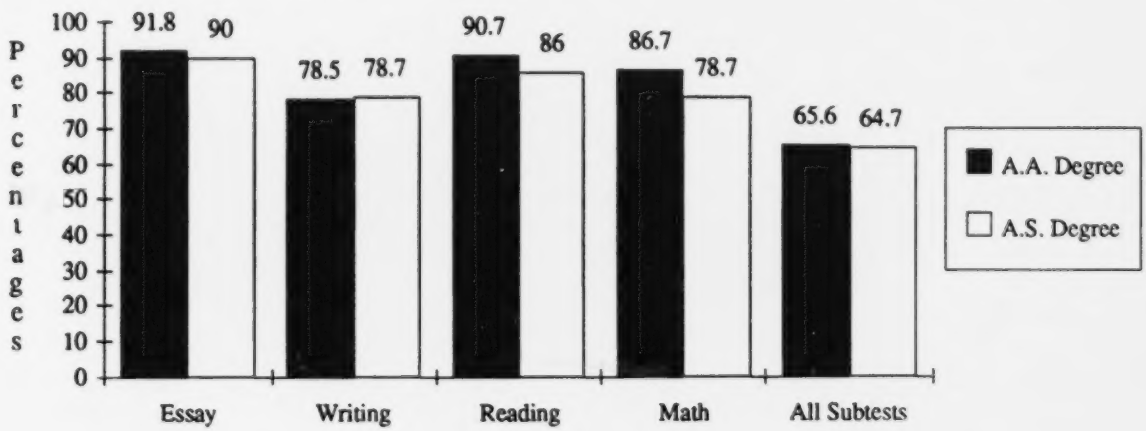
GRAPH 4
PERCENT PASSING CLAST SUBTESTS BASED ON ETHNICITY
OCTOBER, 1989



FIRST TIME TESTED A.A. STUDENTS COMPARED TO A.S. STUDENTS

Graph 5 compares the percentage of students passing each subtest based on the degree sought. Students studying for the A.A. degree did better on the reading, mathematics and essay subtest than those studying for the A.S. degree but the reverse was true for the writing test.

GRAPH 5
PERCENT PASSING CLAST SUBTESTS BASED ON DEGREE
OCTOBER, 1989



In order to examine the relationship between passing CLAST subtests and G.P.A., the number of A.A. and A.S. students passing one, two, three or all subtests was examined. Table 3 shows that 746 of the 756 students passed at least one subtest. According to the data, having a high G.P.A. does not guarantee that a student will pass all four subtests though the percentage of students passing all four subtests increases as the GPA increases. Conversely, having a low G.P.A. does not mean that the student will not pass all four subtests.

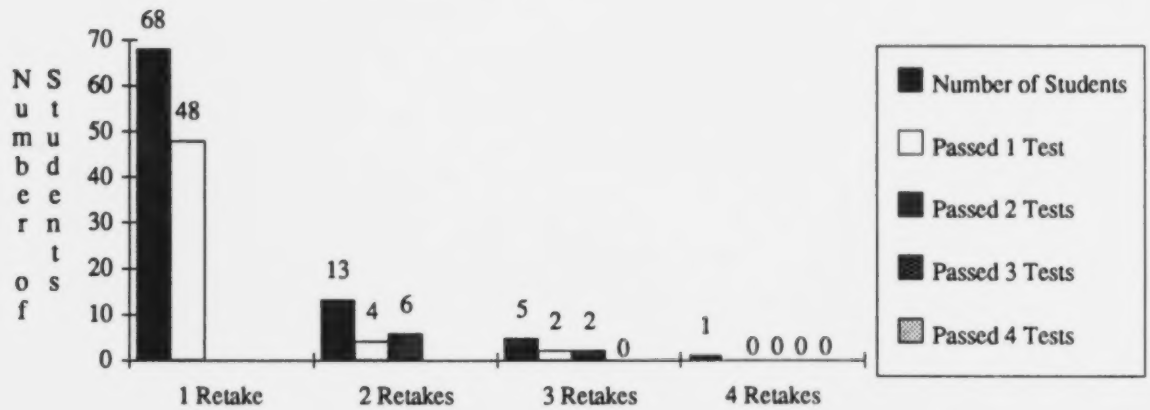
Table 3
GPA OF FIRST TIME TESTED A.A. & A.S. DEGREE SPJC STUDENTS

	Number Tested		Passed One Subtest		Passed Two Subtests		Passed Three Subtests		Passed Four Subtests	
G.P.A.	A.A.	A.S.	A.A.	A.S.	A.A.	A.S.	A.A.	A.S.	A.A.	A.S.
3.50-4.00	71	28	0	0	2	1	5	0	64	27
3.00-3.49	148	51	2	0	4	2	27	5	114	43
2.50-2.99	165	72	4	3	15	8	36	17	109	44
2.00-2.49	136	57	8	3	28	6	39	21	60	23
Below 2.00	15	13	1	1	5	2	4	3	4	6
Total	535	221	15	7	54	19	111	46	351	143

CLAST RETAKES

Eighty-seven (87) SPJC students were classified as retakes. Graph 6 describes the number of students who registered for one to four subtests and the number in each group who successfully passed subtests. The passing rate on all subtests taken was higher when a student had only one or two areas to be retaken. Thirty-five (35) students failed to pass one or more of the scheduled retakes. No student who had three or four areas of retake passed all areas successfully.

GRAPH 6
NUMBER OF STUDENTS RETAKING AND PASSING
CLAST SUBTESTS
OCTOBER, 1989



QUESTIONS

1. The prediction that the percent of students passing all subtests would decrease following the implementation of the 1989 standards was realized; however, what caused the percentage of first-time tested students passing all four subtests to decrease more sharply at community colleges than at state universities?

2. What needs to be done to increase the passing rate for all students and most especially the minority students?

3. What assistance should be provided to students who must retake subtests to help them pass?

4. How many students eventually pass all subtests after successive retakes?

5. Do students fail to complete their programs of study because they cannot pass CLAST?

6. How can we explain the small difference in subtest scores between students who completed 60 or more semester hours and those who completed fewer than 60 semester hours, especially in essay subtests where students with fewer than 60 hours actually scored higher?

Please direct questions or comments about this Educational Abstract or suggestions for future issues to Susanne Fischer, Director of Institutional Research, Institutional and Program Planning, District Office.

ERIC Clearinghouse for Junior Colleges

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